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BOOK NOTICES.

The two volumes which contain the account of the Duke of the *Abruzzi's attempt upon the North Pole are, to me, the most interesting and attractive of any of the recent Arctic narratives.

From the second paragraph of the introduction—

The practical use of Polar expeditions has often been discussed. If only the moral advantage to be derived from these expeditions be considered, I believe that it would suffice to compensate for the sacrifices they demand. As men who surmount difficulties in their daily struggles feel themselves strengthened for an encounter with still greater difficulties, so should also a nation feel itself still more encouraged and urged by the success won by its sons to persevere in striving for its greatness and prosperity—

to the last sentence of the Duke's dispatch to King Victor Emmanuel—

The steadfast courage and determination manifested by the leader of the sledge expedition and by all those who composed it, in spite of immense hardships, assured its success, and acquired fresh glory for our country, by making its flag wave at the highest latitude which has hitherto been reached—

the narrative breathes the spirit of modest determination and effective self-reliance.

Though not as widely heralded either before, during, or after as the expedition of his predecessor Nansen, Abruzzi's expedition was a striking success. The very quietness, effectiveness, and celerity with which his work was accomplished militated against its attracting as much attention as Nansen's protracted voyage. The world did not have time to get uneasy or curious in regard to Abruzzi before he was back again with his work accomplished.

He was fortunate in forcing his ship quickly, and with comparative ease, beyond the northern extremity of Franz Josef Land—a feat not accomplished by any of his predecessors in that region.

The mishap to his ship, following almost immediately after, leaving her forced against the shore and, as it was thought, rendered unseaworthy, only served to bring out strongly the courage and resourcefulness of Abruzzi and his companions.

The successful northing attained by the ship was fittingly

* On the "Polar Star" in the Arctic Sea. By His Royal Highness Luigi Amedeo of Savoy, Duke of the Abruzzi. With the Statements of Commander U. Cagni upon the Sledge Expedition to 86° 34' North, and of Dr. A. Cavalli Molinelli upon his return to the Bay of Teplitz. Translated by William Le Queux. In two volumes, with 212 illustrations in the text, 16 full-page photogravure plates, 2 panoramas, and 5 maps. 8vo. London, Hutchinson & Co., 1903.

capped by the bravery of Cagni and his men in making their departure from the land in the following spring in spite of the most trying obstacles of open water, young ice, and the moving pack, and by their dogged persistency in pushing their way to the highest latitude yet attained in the central polar basin.

It must have been a source of the liveliest regret to Abruzzi—a regret which is shared by the writer—that an accident to himself in a preliminary sledge trip prevented him from commanding this northern party.

On the other hand, it is a source of the most intense satisfaction, for the sake of the men themselves, of Abruzzi, and of the cause of Arctic Exploration in general, that the loss of Cagni's party—a loss which would have made the Expedition a complete catastrophe, instead of a splendid success—was averted, though literally almost by a hair's breadth.

The observations and results of the expedition are valuable.

Cagni's journey straight away north, 326 miles as the crow flies, from C. Fligely, dissipated completely the penumbra of uncertain islands which has surrounded Franz-Josef-Land since Payer and Weyprecht's visit, and defines the group sharply and clearly as an archipelago of moderate size, its northern shores lying third in order of proximity to the Pole.

The expedition was particularly valuable, in my opinion, in that it eliminated from further consideration the so-called Franz-Josef-Land route to the Pole.

It is interesting to note that of the various explorers of Franz-Josef-Land, viz.: Payer and Weyprecht, Leigh Smith, Jackson, Wellman, Baldwin, and Abruzzi, the last is the only one who succeeded in pushing beyond the northern headland of the archipelago.

In view of this fact Abruzzi's remarks upon the subject of the attainment of the Pole are particularly valuable as well as extremely interesting. His words are given in full:

It would be useless to repeat the attempt [of reaching the Pole] by following the same plan [the route from Franz-Josef-Land]. It would, at most, be possible to push a few miles further towards the north, if the ice on the Arctic Ocean was in an unusually favourable state; but the results would not afford any compensation for the fatigue and the privations undergone. While following, therefore, the invariable plan of setting out from some point on land, and not from a ship drifting in the ice, on account of the reasons put forth in the first chapter of this work, it will be necessary to find some other method of shortening the distance which has to be travelled with sledges. What I should recommend would be to sail along the western coast of Greenland to the north of Kennedy Sound, where it ought to be possible, under favourable conditions, to go to a still higher latitude than that reached by the *Alert* off Grant Land. * * *

The weight of the load carried by the sledges should not be calculated according to what the men and dogs can draw, but according to the limitations imposed by the unevenness of the ground over which the march must be performed. On ice in the neighbourhood of land, the weight of the load, together with that of the sledge, must not be over 550 lbs. * * *

It should be remembered that, no matter from where the start may take place, there will always be a belt of very difficult ice in the vicinity of land. * * *

This belt of rugged ice, as was observed when Cagni's expedition set out, may be looked upon as extending about 120 miles from the coast. * * *

Greenland possesses the following advantages over Emperor Franz Josef Archipelago. The funnel formed by the northern opening of Robeson Sound and Grant Land to the west, and Greenland to the east, must stop the movement of the ice towards the south in spring, when the expedition would be on its way towards the north, and would thus prevent the drift which reduced the length of Cagni's daily marches so much, especially during the period of the expedition.

Emperor Franz Josef Archipelago forms a triangle, with its summit towards the north, and is, therefore, difficult to find; and what happened to Cagni * * * might happen to any detachment that wanted to reach the camp on Prince Rudolph Island. This danger does not exist in Greenland, * * * and if the expedition deviated from its course when returning, it would easily find the camp by following the coast."

Abruzzi has arrived independently, completely, and clearly at my own views. I regret that he could not have combined with his intelligent preparation and courageous push my own years of experience in equipment, icecraft, and management of dogs. Could this combination have been possible, while Abruzzi would not have reached the Pole he could have increased his already splendid march by at least a hundred miles.

There is another aspect of Abruzzi's expedition which is instructive—the example which he has given to young men of wealth and leisure all over the world to devote their time and their money to adding something to the store of the world's knowledge and attaining for themselves an honorable and commanding reputation, rather than waste both time and money in pursuit of amusement, or worse.

Altogether, Abruzzi himself, and his expedition, possess a striking personality. The expedition will last long in the annals of Arctic effort, and the Duke has proved himself well worthy of the traditions of the House of Savoy.

The style of the narrative is effective—it is simple, modest, clear, and direct. There is no padding; there is no space wasted in communing with the infinite, or in word-painting. Finally, Abruzzi has been fortunate in his translator, and the book is almost entirely free of the peculiarities which often unfavorably impress one in reading books translated from a foreign language.

R. E. PEARY.

Central Europe. By Joseph Partsch, Ph.D., Professor of Geography in the University of Breslau. With Maps and Diagrams. In *The Regions of the World Series.* Edited by H. J. Mackinder, M.A. D. Appleton & Company, New York, 1903.

Professor Partsch's contribution to this series is a very interesting volume. The territory he describes extends from the North and Baltic Seas to Turkey, or, in other words, it embraces Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany in the north, Switzerland and Austria-Hungary in the centre, and Montenegro, Servia, Rumania, and Bulgaria in the south. Over this very large region he travels again and again, describing it in its various aspects. To profit most by its perusal the reader should follow the text with a good atlas. The considerable number of small maps scattered through the book are very useful for their special purposes; but few books have recently appeared which will so well repay careful reading with a first-rate atlas at hand. Such a book as this and good maps for constant reference help one another. Both are illuminative; and each aids the other to impart to the mental vision a clear and accurate view of the things described and their relations. The book may well be recommended to any mature student to be read in this way, securing at once a fine, thorough, geographic study and excellent drill in map reading.

The first seven chapters are given to a concise treatment of the physical history and present physical condition of Central Europe, interesting because the author has imagination as well as scholarly attainments, and all the more interesting if read, or rather studied, with much care; for work of this sort may not prove to be remarkably edifying to those who do not understand each statement both in itself and also in its relation to the context. The essentially continental climate is depicted in its normal conditions, its sharp contrasts, and its striking departures from the normal, as exhibited in Herzegovina. The great movements and migrations of the peoples which may be traced with certainty only for twenty centuries are described. Only one chapter is given to the political development of these States, and thus little more than a general glance at their conformation is possible.

Forty-two pages are devoted to the most striking facts of economic geography. This chapter exhibits strongly a noteworthy characteristic of the entire volume, or, in other words, a dominating feature of its plan, without which so much ground could scarcely be covered successfully in 358 pages. Minutiæ are rigorously repressed, and attention is centred upon the essential, vital features

of the topic. Thus the space given to cattle is less than two pages; but the part of cattle in the economy of Central Europe, the marked differences between these animals in the Baltic peninsula, on the North German plain, and among the central mountain pastures, with the differing purposes for which cattle are reared, are clearly brought out; and the effect of the sparsity or abundance of natural productions upon the trade relations with other lands is shown.

Chapters XII to XVIII inclusive are given to a more detailed treatment of the countries. The value of these chapters is heightened by the fact that the dominating note is the influence of the geographic environment upon the development and the material position of the various peoples. Cause and effect are everywhere closely united. The natural influences that have tended to turn the energies of the Swiss very largely into industrial channels, the water-power that gives its support to the cotton trade of Northeastern Switzerland, the topography which in that republic has nurtured the development of several independent and competing centres of intellectual and material exchange; the position of Budapest, close to the mountain regions whence come its wood and ores, its wines and building stone, and overlooking the immeasurable plains on the east, whose cereals, cattle, and horses are brought hither to market, all of which have fostered the blossoming of Budapest into one of the finest of modern cities, are examples of Dr. Partsch's able treatment of the anthropogeographic aspects of Central Europe. The volume is concluded with chapters on water and rail communication and conditions of national defence, followed by a copious index.

Each chapter in the book ends with a list of authorities in which those portions of their writings bearing especially upon the topic of the chapter are indicated. Dr. Partsch's manuscript was found to be too long for publication in an English series, and it was therefore abridged in the translation. It will be published in German in the original form.

A Guide to Belfast and the Counties of Down and Antrim. Prepared for the Meeting of the British Association by the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club. The Linenhall Press, Belfast, 1902.

Since 1874 specially-prepared guide books have usually been adjuncts of the Annual Meetings of the British Association. The topics in each hand-book are prepared by experts, and the result is a work that is very useful to the members of the Association and